162 Dominated by the great and often marshy forest, this country is
361 characterized by a very localized population indicated on a map by "strips" linked to the system of rivers. In the two districts which they occupy, Booué and Makokou, the Fang are the dominating ethnic group, forming about 45 percent and 40 percent of the total population. They are in the neighborhood of ethnic groups which are considered to be related to them, the Shaké and the
[177] Bakwélé. By their migrations they have disordered the population of this region and created contacts resulting in great cultural contaminations. If one can believe Father Trilles, who noted an "archaic language" used in the legends, proverbs, and songs, and similar to Batéké, (1) the relations with the peoples of the Congo

1. Father H. Trilles, op. cit

and Gabon borders would be early.

173 According to tradition, the Fang-Maké (or Bisibé) were the first to reach the Ivindo. De Brazza finds them on the Ogooué (on the island of Zabouré). Their largest tribe is Mékuk, specifically
619 referred to by Father Trilles and specially mentioned by Tessmann on his distribution map. Outside of the Maké, the Fang of this region are in two distinct groups — Bétsi and Nzaman — the latter representing, according to early authors, the "true Pahouin of the Ogooué." (2) In Booué District the villages, although without clan

2 Cf. Captain Curault, "Monographie du secteur de N'Djolé au Gabon [Monograph on the N'Djolé section of Gabon]," Revue des Troupes Coloniales, 68, 1908.

homogeneity, showed at the time of the "regrouping movement" the predominance of the three great tribes, Yémödâg, Yémvâg, and Yémisèm.

511 The Ogooué-Ivindo seems to be one of the poorest regions of
● 702 Gabon. Not having any economic equipment, it was only precariously active during the war effort. On the other hand, frequent recruiting has seriously affected this country (which along with

N'Gounié and Woleu-N'Tem was a "reservoir of manpower") by upsetting its demographic equilibrium. Consequently, most of the administrative reports stress the poverty and mediocrity of the villages, the political instability and "indiscipline," and the eagerness with which all innovations are greeted in the hope of improving conditions. [84]

Region of the Maritime Ogooué

During the second half of the nineteenth century the Fang descended the Ogooué in order to reach the trading centers established on the river, and the counting houses of the coast. They pushed back the Bakèlè, imposed themselves on the Galwa and the Nkomi. Since 1880 the Fang have settled in large numbers along the Ogooué as a result of a penetration which organized convoys on the river, created posts, and made possible the settlement of traders.

The Fang are settled in the four districts forming this administrative region, but in that of Ombooué, the extreme point of their advance, they represent less than 5 percent of the population. Ninety-five percent of the 9,300 inhabitants of N'Djolé District are Fang who have taken the place of the ancient Bakélé people. They belong to the Maké, Nzaman, and Bétsi groups; the first of these was located downstream from N'Djolé before 1865 (1).

1. Captain Curault, op. cit.

They came largely from the Lower Ivindo, but also from the Woleu-N'Tem, where the villagers soon sought to obtain commercial outlets on the Ogooué. Outside of a small mine exploitation at N'Djolé, this district is extremely bare. Consequently, the very scattered villages have a miserable appearance, and the male population has been canvassed (or recruited) by the neighboring lumber works and by the coastal centers.

Lambaréné District, which is very important because of its forest exploitations (and also because it is an old commercial center, still has a largely Fang population. These are in opposition to the aboriginal group of the Galwa (less than 2,200 individuals)

8: Bennett D-5 (ca. 1898) 1899 FH9 Fang FH9

The mariner's compass is entirely unknown, and when I have shown one, it was always spoken of as "the white man's *biang bial*" (canoe fetish). The Fang shapes his course by his knowledge of the river banks; he never ventures more than three days' journey from his own town, and much dislikes the idea of losing sight of land; therefore he seldom, if ever, attempts it. Certain canoes belong to the headman of the village, others to individuals. The canoes do not have houses; charms are frequently tied to the bow, to appease the water spirit, and frequently a traveller in a canoe will throw into the river at certain places he passes portions of his food to appease the local spirit which he believes dwells there. The place where this spirit dwells may be in some large tree or rock on the river bank. At night the canoes are hauled up on the river bank and usually left unprotected. Large war canoes, if painted, are occasionally covered with a few mats. No special portion of a canoe is set apart for a chief, he is usually seated near the bow. Watertight compartments for provisions are not provided, food and articles of trade being carried in high baskets. Upon arrival of a canoe from a neighbouring town, the visitors are frequently welcomed with shouts of joy; guns are fired and a dance given in the evening. I have seen canoes repaired by placing pieces of bark over the leaks inside and outside, the bark being secured with small hard wood plugs. No arrangement is made to prevent leaking.

Hooks for fishing are skilfully made of bamboo, the barb is long, very sharp and notched on both sides. The hook is secured to the fishing-line with string made of pineapple fibre. Foreign-made fish-hooks are now largely used; these are much coveted, and considered a very staple article of trade.

Casting nets are used weighed with stones, iron, or lead, obtained in trade. The meshes are very fine and show much skilful and patient workmanship. A Fang will work well at anything which he can do while sitting in the palaver house. He can then work, smoke and talk; any work requiring much bodily exertion on his part or elsewhere is relegated to his wives. Fish traps are made of split bamboo and much resemble the lobster baskets used by our own fishermen. Small streams are often dammed at high water, the dam being made of split bamboo, fastened together with bush rope until a very large screen is made, 10 or 12 feet in height; this screen is staked across the stream at high water, when the tide falls the water passes readily through, leaving the fish in the river. The most disgusting sight among the Fang, is to see the women and children at low water walking in the mud, breast high, feeling for "mud fish." The large casting net is called *ewot*; a small round net used for dipping in pools and along the river bank at low water is called *tan*.

VI.—*Metallurgy, Fire, Machinery.*

Metallurgy among the Fang is limited to the working of iron. The native word for iron is *Eki*. The Fang among whom I lived did not possess the knowledge of smelting, but I was told that "other Fang far away in the bush, especially the Nqui (dwarfs), dug the *minkok eki* (stones of iron) out of the earth, melted it, and